

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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|---|---|----------------------------|
| Darrell Allen Findley, |) | C/A No.: 8:23-1917-RMG-SVH |
| |) | |
| Plaintiff, |) | |
| |) | |
| vs. |) | |
| |) | ORDER AND NOTICE |
| Fox News Channel (and its parent company), |) | |
| |) | |
| Defendant. |) | |
| |) | |

Darrel Allen Findley (“Plaintiff”), proceeding pro se, filed this complaint against Fox News Channel (and its parent company) (“Defendant”). Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and Local Civ. Rule 73.02(B)(2)(e) (D.S.C.), the undersigned is authorized to review such complaints for relief and submit findings and recommendations to the district judge.

I. Factual and Procedural Background

Plaintiff’s complaint states “On air, live broadcast, slander, criminal stalking, criminal conspiracy, public shaming, indecent or criminal sexual gestures, civil rights violations, separation of church and state law violation, FCC rule violations.” [ECF No. 1 at 2]. He seeks one million dollars in damages. *Id.*

II. Discussion

A. Standard of Review

Plaintiff filed his complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915, which permits an indigent litigant to commence an action in federal court without prepaying the administrative costs of proceeding with the lawsuit. To protect against possible abuses of this privilege, the statute allows a district court to dismiss a case upon a finding that the action fails to state a claim on which relief may be granted or is frivolous or malicious. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i), (ii). A finding of frivolity can be made where the complaint lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact. *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 31 (1992). A claim based on a meritless legal theory may be dismissed sua sponte under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B). *See Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 327 (1989).

A complaint must contain “a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). Pro se complaints are held to a less stringent standard than those drafted by attorneys. *Gordon v. Leeke*, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir. 1978). In evaluating a pro se complaint, the plaintiff’s allegations are assumed to be true. *Fine v. City of N.Y.*, 529 F.2d 70, 74 (2d Cir. 1975). The mandated liberal construction afforded to pro se pleadings means that if the court can reasonably read the pleadings to state a valid claim on which the plaintiff could prevail, it should do so. A federal court is charged with liberally construing a complaint filed by

a pro se litigant to allow the development of a potentially meritorious case. *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007).

The requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts that set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. *Weller v. Dep't of Soc. Servs.*, 901 F.2d 387, 390–91 (4th Cir. 1990). Although the court must liberally construe a pro se complaint, the United States Supreme Court has made it clear a plaintiff must do more than make conclusory statements to state a claim. *See Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 677–78 (2009); *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007). Rather, the complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to state a claim that is plausible on its face, and the reviewing court need only accept as true the complaint's factual allegations, not its legal conclusions. *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678–79.

B. Analysis

Plaintiff has failed to meet the minimal standards for the filing of a complaint. A civil action is commenced by filing a complaint with the court. Fed. R. Civ. P. 3. Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a), a pleading that states a claim for relief must contain “a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief.” Plaintiff provided a short, plain statement, but his statement does not show he is entitled to relief. *See* ECF No. 1. Plaintiff makes only conclusory allegations of violations of the law, but provides no

factual allegations to support these conclusions. He also fails to provide any allegations showing this court has jurisdiction over this case. Although Plaintiff lists allegations of constitutional violations, Defendant is a private entity, which is not ordinarily liable for violations of the Constitution. Further, Plaintiff does not provide any facts showing he has been personally injured by Defendant. Although Plaintiff states the relief sought, he does not provide a basis for such relief. *Id.* For the foregoing reasons, Plaintiff's complaint is subject to summary dismissal for failure to meet the minimal requirements for the filing of a complaint.

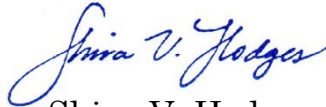
NOTICE CONCERNING AMENDMENT

Plaintiff may attempt to correct the defects in his complaint by filing an amended complaint by **June 14, 2023**, along with any appropriate service documents. Plaintiff is reminded an amended complaint replaces the original complaint and should be complete in itself. *See Young v. City of Mount Ranier*, 238 F.3d 567, 572 (4th Cir. 2001) ("As a general rule, an amended pleading ordinarily supersedes the original and renders it of no legal effect.") (citation and internal quotation marks omitted). If Plaintiff files an amended complaint, the undersigned will conduct screening of the amended complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. If Plaintiff fails to file an amended complaint or fails to cure the deficiencies identified above, the undersigned will recommend to the

district court that the claims specified above be dismissed without leave for further amendment.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

May 24, 2023
Columbia, South Carolina



Shiva V. Hodges
United States Magistrate Judge